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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, March 24, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "'Yarbs' and Spring Tonics." Approved by Bureau of Home Economics,  
U. S. D. A. Program includes menu and recipes.

Bulletins available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes," and "Eggs at Any Meal."

--ooOoo--

Gentle Spring zephyrs  
Waft ever to me,  
Mem'ries of Senna and  
Sassafras tea.

Ho, hum! Spring is coming -- "spring, beautiful spring" is on her way, bringing a host of spring poets -- bowers and flowers, moons and tunes, birds and bees, and what-you-please, just so it rhymes.

Last week a young man from "somewhere in Tennessee" sent me a sheaf of verses, which he had just dashed off. "Something seemed to come over me all of a sudden," he writes, "and these original verses are the result. I shall be glad for any suggestions from you, Aunt Sammy."

Well, this is a difficult problem. I hardly know what to do about it. Perhaps if the young man would eat more vegetables -- that's the solution, I'm sure! He has a bad attack of spring fever, and spring fever always affects spring poets.

What is "spring fever," anyway? To most of us, spring fever means only the lazy feeling which comes over us during the first warm days, when we want to do nothing but relax, and rest in the warm sunshine. But there is another kind of spring fever which demands some attention. Persons who have this type of spring fever are not simply lazy. They have a sluggish feeling, which indicates that their bodies are not in good working order.

We eat food to nourish our bodies. The part that does not nourish our bodies should be thrown off, as waste matter. Fruits and vegetables help rid the body of waste matter. In the winter time, when fruits and vegetables are expensive, or hard to obtain, our bodies may not get enough mineral matter and vitamins. These act as body regulators. In the summer, when we eat an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, our bodies can store up a surplus of valuable food materials. This surplus may become depleted in the spring, if the diet has been limited during the winter.



Very likely your family will not need a spring tonic, if you have been including in your daily meals plenty of such vegetables as carrots, turnips, celery, cabbage, parsnips, lettuce, good old-fashioned sauerkraut, and canned vegetables. Oranges, apples, and grapefruit help to ward off spring fever. When fresh fruits are not obtainable, dried fruits -- apricots, prunes, figs, raisins, and so forth, are very good substitutes. For the season just before fresh green vegetables are available, I try to include in my meals the foods I have mentioned, and canned tomatoes -- lots of canned tomatoes.

Almost before we realize it, the wild greens are ready for table use. Dandelion leaves, dock, wild mustard, lamb's quarter or pigweed, watercress, and sorrel. Do you know that sorrel is often used as flavoring with mild greens, and in salads? Then there are the cultivated greens. Every garden should contain some of these - spinach, Swiss chard, kale, mustard, horseradish, young turnip tops, and beet tops.

Greens, whether they're wild or cultivated, add variety to the diet, and stimulate capricious appetites. They furnish building material for children, help prevent constipation, and supply the vitamins needed for normal health. There's iron in greens, too, just as there is in expensive tonics, put up in fancy glass bottles.

Liver is another rich source of iron and vitamins, and is sometimes given to people suffering from anaemia.

Speaking of iron, why buy spring tonic from the drugstore, when the hens are working overtime to produce an abundance of eggs, which are far more effective as a source of iron? Egg yolk heads the list of iron-rich foods. It is one of the best possible means of supplying the body with this valuable mineral. Egg yolk contains phosphorus and calcium, too, elements needed to build bones, teeth, and other tissues. The white of eggs comes very near to being pure protein, which is one of the chief substances of our bodies. Eggs are also rich sources of vitamins, those A B C's of the diet, needed to promote health and proper development. Taken all in all, the hen beats the doctor as a mixer of spring tonic. She combines minerals, with other valuable foods, in a form that the body finds particularly useful.

Every wise homemaker plans to use an abundance of eggs in the spring. Good economy, as well as good nutrition. There are so many appetizing ways of using whole eggs, or the yolks and whites in separate dishes, that the family need never tire of them.

One or two egg yolks, stirred into a milk soup, or sauce for a vegetable, just before serving, increases food value and improves flavor. For children, especially, this is a good way to add iron to the diet.

Custards, steamed or baked, soft or stiff, are year-around standbys in most households. In the spring, however, the homemaker can afford to be more generous with the eggs. The family will enjoy a pudding, or a soft custard served with stewed fruit, occasionally, instead of cream.





In these and many other ways, the clever homemaker can put so much iron in the daily meals that there will be no need for the patent medicine man's tonic.

There's another year-around tonic I haven't mentioned, and that is cod-liver oil. It is really a food rich in vitamins. If you have a husband or an uncle who feels that he must have a tonic which comes in a bottle, which he can take from a spoon, give him cod-liver oil.

When the members of my family begin to grow listless, and lose their appetites, I take special pains that their meals include plenty of fresh vegetables, canned tomatoes, fresh or dried fruits, and eggs. Such foods as these put old-fashioned "yarbs" clear out of the running.

So much for the spring tonics. We shall now proceed to the important part of the program, which is a menu, and a recipe. Are you ready to write the menu? Fried Onions and Apples; Wilted Lettuce; Peas; Fruit Cup; and Ginger Cookies.

Here is the recipe for Fried Onions and Apples -- is this a new recipe for some of you? Five ingredients, for Fried Onions and Apples:

3 tablespoons fat	1 pint sliced onions, and
1 quart sliced tart apples	1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar	

Five ingredients, for Fried Onions and Apples: (Repeat).

Melt the fat in a heavy skillet. Add the apples and onions. Cover. Cook slowly until nearly tender. Stir frequently to prevent scorching. Remove the cover, sprinkle the salt and sugar over the apples and onions, and continue the cooking until they are lightly browned. Serve at once.

And here is our tried-and-true recipe for Ginger Cookies. Seven ingredients, for Ginger Cookies.

1 cup molasses	1 to 2 tablespoons ginger
1/2 cup fat	1-1/2 teaspoon salt, and
3-1/4 cups flour	1/2 teaspoon soda.
2 tablespoons sugar	

Seven ingredients. Better check them, while I repeat the list: (Repeat).

Heat the molasses to the boiling point. Add the fat. Remove from the fire. Stir until the fat is melted. Sift the dry ingredients, and mix them with the molasses and fat. Chill the dough, thoroughly. Then roll it out very thin, and cut into cookies. If the dough is thoroughly chilled, it is not necessary to flour the board. Bake the cookies in a slow oven, and remove them from the pan, before they cool. Store them in a tin box, when cool, so they'll keep crisp.

To repeat the menu: Fried Onions and Apples; Wilted Lettuce; Peas; Fruit Cup; and Ginger Cookies.

Tuesday: "Questions Homemakers Ask Us."

